

Interreg VI-A Greece-Bulgaria

Technical Assistance Budget Plan

Rationale for 2021 – 2027

The Technical Assistance (TA in short) funds of the Cross Border Cooperation Programme “Interreg VI-A Greece-Bulgaria” 2014-2020 [CCI: 2021TC16RFCB021 / EC decision number: C (2022)6635 / 13-09-2022], will support preparatory, monitoring, control, audit, evaluation, communication, visibility and administrative actions, necessary for the implementation of the new Program.

The Rationale of the Technical Assistance Multiannual Budget Plan for the programming period 2021-2027 draws on (i) the new regulations of the EU – mainly Reg. 1059/2021, (ii) the input that is available, until now, on the TA actions that need to be implemented by this Programme, and (iii) the accumulated experience that has been acquired from the monitoring of the TA Axis and the implementation of the TA operations in the previous programming periods.

During the drafting of the Multiannual plans of Technical Assistance at the beginning of each programming period (initial calculated budgets), we have the following diagram (Diagram 1):

Comparison between the two programming periods: 2014-2020 & 2021-2027

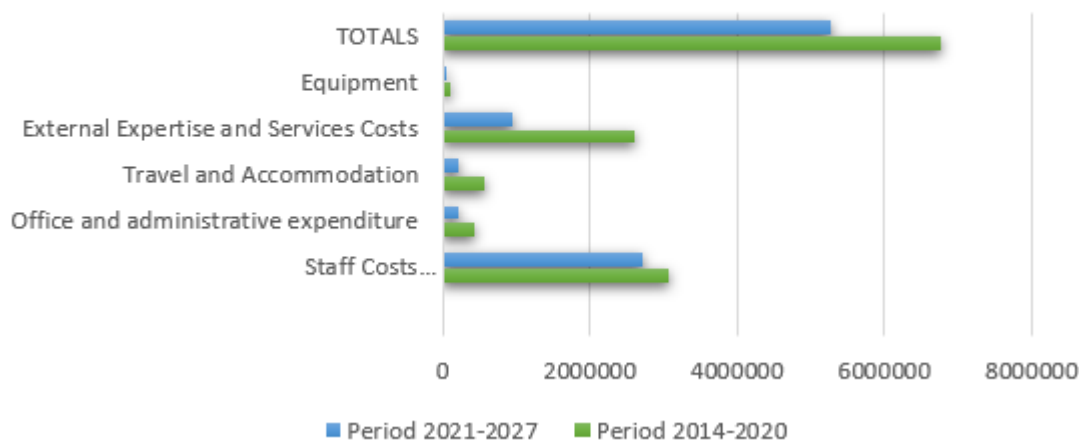


Diagram 1: Comparison between the two consecutive programming periods of the Greece-Bulgaria Programme at the planning stage

Given that, the Budget [European Union support and National counterpart of the Technical Assistance] is €5,272,602.00, which is close to the last revised TA Budget for the 2014-2020 period (€4,185,856.00). after the respective modifications which took place. Furthermore, according to cumulative experience gained in managing the TA Axis, the COVID-19 pandemic experience and the respective reduction of economic activities was also taken into consideration. The following comparison between the actual

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expenses of 2014-2020 period and the proposed budget of 2021-2027 period can be shown in Diagram 2.

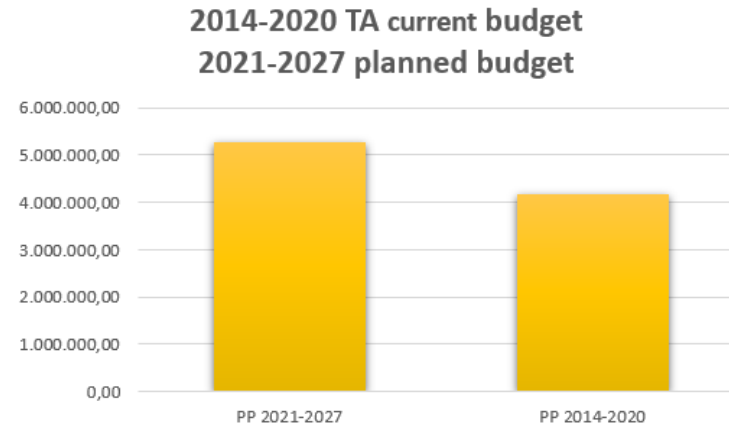


Diagram 2: Comparison between the two consecutive programming periods of the Greece-Bulgaria Programme at the current stage

The proposed Technical Assistance Multiannual Budget Plan 2021-2027 is structured in rows and columns as follows:

- Rows represent budget categories, that is the different cost categories of the TA actions, classified in 5 budget lines.
- The column “Programme Management Budget – column D” refers to all the activities that will be undertaken by the Joint Secretariat (JS), with the aid of the Managing Authority (MA), for the whole of the new Programme. It also incorporates core activities undertaken by the MA, that are more of a permanent nature. The total amount of the TA Budget for the 2021-2027 period, allocated to the “Programme Management (Greece)” column, is proposed to be **€4.074.875,00**
- The column “National Authority Budget- column E” refers to the estimated expenses for the Bulgarian part, which are going to be taken at local level. The total amount of the TA Budget for the 2021-2027 period, allocated to the “NA” column, is proposed to be **€1.197.727,00**

In the following diagrams (Diagram3 & 4), the proportion of the proposed TA budget between the two countries may be shown. It is worth underlining that excluding the inelastic expenditure for staff costs, the proposed budget distribution between the two countries is roughly equal.

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Diagram 3: Proposed 2021-2027 technical assistance budget distribution.



Diagram 4: Proposed 2021-2027 technical assistance budget distribution (JS staff cost is excluded)

According to the proposed multiannual plan that sums up the Programme Management (Greece) and the Bulgarian national authority, the calculated amounts of the TA Multiannual Budget Plan per each year are indicative. Additionally, the TA Multiannual Budget Plan is undoubtedly dynamic. This means that there will be definite reallocations between the different budget lines and shifting of amounts in the subsequent years, that will stem from the expenditures that will be paid and verified in each year and the new updated estimations on the registered actions and/or new ones that may turn up.

Description of the five (5) budget lines - categories of actions of the Budget Plan.

<p>1. Staff Costs</p> <p><u>2.700.000,00 €</u></p>	<p><u>(1) Joint Secretariat costs:</u></p> <p>Employment of eleven (11) people. These are: one (1) Coordinator, seven (7) Project Officers, one (1) Financial Officer, one (1) Communication and Technical Assistance Officer, and one (1)</p>
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	<p>Administrative Assistant, who are based in Thessaloniki/Greece. Currently, the positions of 1 Project Officer and 1 Administrative Assistance are vacant.</p> <p>The budget will cover gross wages, employer’s social security contributions, overtime remunerations and all other kind of benefits of the aforementioned personnel (child and kindergarten allowances, meal vouchers, overtime, etc.) covered by the employment contract, for the period that starts at January 2024 and ends in December 2029 (6 years). As for 2023, the expenditures have been foreseen in the 2014-2020 TA Budget Plan.</p> <p>The monthly gross salary for all members of the JS is estimated at 3.340,00€, on full-time employment per month, including employer’s contributions and allowances. On a (total) monthly basis: 36.740€ On an annual basis: 36.740,00€ per month X 12 months = 440.880,00€ For the 2024-2029 period: 440.880,00€per year x 6 years = 2.645.280,00€ (2.700.000,00 rounded value)</p> <p>Programme Management (Greece): 2.700.000,00€</p>
<p>2. Office and administrative costs 209.000,00 €</p>	<p>Expenditures (i.e. general operational costs) mainly related to office rents, communication costs (e.g. phone bills, internet, mobiles, couriers), cleaning services, kitchen consumables, electricity and water expenses, maintenance of office equipment, health and technical services, office expendables and small budget miscellaneous outgoings.</p> <p>Programme Management (Greece): 194.000,00€</p> <p>National Authority of Bulgaria: 15.000,00 €</p>
<p>3. Travel and accommodation costs 258.080,00 €</p>	<p>Coverage and reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs of the members/personnel of the Monitoring Committee, Joint Secretariat, InfoPoint, Managing Authority, National Authority, Paying Authority, Audit Authority, representatives from both National</p>

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	<p>Authorities and the European Commission, FLC & Financial staff for their participation in MC meetings, technical meetings, conferences, workshops, training of beneficiaries, partner search forums, promotional activities, ETC events, capitalization events, etc.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Programme Management (Greece): 200.000,00 € NA of Bulgaria: 58.080,00 €</p>
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<p>4. External expertise and services costs, audits, services of evaluation, additional support</p> <p>2.068.447,00 €</p>	<p>(1) Information and Publicity: Necessary information and publicity measures for the communication and promotion of the Program to the EU citizens and beneficiaries, with the aim of increasing awareness for the Program and ensure that assistance from the Funds is transparent. The description of this action is available at the communication plan of the Programme.</p> <p>(2) External Technical Support: Contracting with external experts, concerning the provision of services for the support of the Program, such as planning, implementation, feasibility reports, evaluation and technical expertise, in particular when special knowledge is needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evaluation services: Contracting with external experts for the evaluation plan and the external evaluation reports of the Program. b. Organization of events and meetings: Expenditures addressed to the organization of all the events (mainly Monitoring and technical meetings, EC Day), related to the operation and the promotion of the Programme. For instance, hire of the venue, audiovisual equipment, photographers, interpreters, folders, catering (lunch & coffee breaks), etc. c. Legal services related to judicial appeals from Bulgarian beneficiaries <p>(3) Internal Technical Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Remuneration (including employer’s social security contributions) of MRDPW <u>employees supporting the implementation of the programme</u> b. Remuneration (including employer’s social security contributions) of MRDPW <u>employees carrying out the first level control of BG beneficiaries</u> <p>(4) Training of Staff: Prioritizing the training and development of the staff across all levels of the organization, not only the employees are empowered to excel in their roles but also position the MA/NA structures for sustained growth,</p>
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	<p>adaptability, and success in an ever-changing business landscape.</p> <p>(5) Event Organization: Entails a series of steps to follow to make it work perfectly and achieve the desired objectives. With a good dose of creativity, organization, and supported by new technologies, the current requirements, especially with the pandemic issue, will imply communication's goals. All kind of supporting services (i.e. venue rentals, translation, interpretation, etc) are included.</p> <p>(6) According to the fact that the NA FLC system, is shifted from a decentralized to a centralized structure and is planned to cover the programming period 2021-2027 with the experience gained from its exercise put during 2014-2020, associated costs are located and provisioned for the effective and successful expenditure certification procedures</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Programme Management (Greece): 950.000,00 € Bulgaria: 1.118.447,00 €</p>
<p>5. Equipment costs</p> <p>37.075,00 €</p>	<p>(1) Software and Hardware: Development, supply and installation of custom-made business management software, such as MIS-ETC, ERP, etc. Information Technology hardware, such as PCs, printers, scanners, telephones, faxes, photocopiers, network, etc.</p> <p>(2) Office Equipment and Others: Supply of desks, chairs, drawers, bookcases and other furniture, necessary for the operation of offices (JS and IP). Purchase of specialized books and subscription to magazines and/or newspapers, as well as the necessary material for office organization. In this category the purchase of special equipment is also accommodated (e.g. purchase of a car).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Programme Management (Greece): 30.875,00 € NA of Bulgaria: 6.200,00 €</p>